



COMMONWEALTH COMMUNIQUE

A Publication for State Employees

AUGUST 2005

FROM THE SECRETARY

**By Erwin Roberts
Personnel Cabinet Secretary**

When Governor Ernie Fletcher signed into law the 2005 budget, he signed into existence an important project that will benefit each and every current – and future – Kentucky state government employee.

Contained within that budget was funding for the first phase of a new human resource information system for the Personnel Cabinet – a system that will replace our current antiquated system with a more up-to-date one which employees and potential employees will find very user-friendly.

The Personnel Cabinet's current system is 23-years-old and is programmed in Cobol – a programming language that

See SECRETARY, Page 3

IN THIS ISSUE

In Step With Commissioner Harman **Page 2**

Adoption Benefit Program **Page 3**

Employee Health Insurance
Kingdom Come State Park **Page 4**

Education/ Work Scholarship **Page 5**

Governor Promotes Safety **Page 6**

Carter Caves State Park **Page 7**

EEO Conference **Page 9**

Employee Assistance **Page 11**



Governor Ernie Fletcher Addresses the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Merit System
(Photo by Office of Creative Services)

Governor Fletcher Addresses the Blue Ribbon Task Force

On July 11, Governor Ernie Fletcher announced the formation of a Blue Ribbon Task Force to examine and make recommendations on possible changes to the merit system. During that announcement, the Governor cited a report commissioned by former Governor Brereton Jones in 1993 that found several problems in the merit system, and called the system obsolete and ineffective. These problems were not addressed.

On July 28, Governor Fletcher spoke at the first meeting of the task force, giving the group its charge. The bipartisan group, made up of legislators, merit employees and other parties, is to present a report to the Governor by November 1.

Below are Governor Fletcher's comments from the July 28 meeting.
Good afternoon.

Let me first thank each of you for your willingness to serve. Each of you was chosen because I strongly believe you form a group that brings the experience and diversity to do the important work that is before you.

You represent current and former office holders, current members of the House

See GOVERNOR, Page 8

IN STEP WITH COMMISSIONER WAYNE HARMAN DEPARTMENT FOR PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

The Personnel Cabinet is pleased to announce a critical project currently under development. This project, the Human Resource Information System (HRIS), is designed to manage services for applicants and state employees. The HRIS will provide effective human resource (HR) solutions for current needs and establish future services to employees, managers and state applicants.

Wayne Harman, Commissioner of the Department for Personnel Administration, serves as the sponsor for the HRIS Project and is instrumental in providing leadership and vision for the initiative. His department includes the Divisions of Employee Management, Staffing Services and HR Projects, as well as the Systems Management Branch. The department is the first “face” that potential employees see as they apply for a job. The staff also provides on-going support for personnel and payroll functions throughout the career span of all state employees.

Commissioner Harman’s background is in information technology (IT) with extensive experience in providing these services to streamline HR functions. He has served as a private IT consultant for the past three years.

Prior to that he was the director of IT operations and the director of HR operations at the University of Kentucky (UK) in Lexington. He was also employed by Wang Laboratories as a regional business director, ensuring all systems and products met or exceeded clients’ needs. UK was one of his customers while he was at Wang Laboratories.

The Personnel Cabinet is mandated to provide HR functions for the entire commonwealth and its employees. Those functions include:

personnel	retirement
payroll	training
health insurance	EEO/affirmative action
life insurance	safety
classification and compensation	performance management
deferred compensation	

The HRIS will not only be advantageous for current state employees, it will also provide a variety of benefits for the entire commonwealth. The new system aims to provide a Web-based integrated self-service product that will give prospective applicants and existing employees 24/7 access to facets of personnel ranging from the application phase to the multiple benefits systems. The HRIS will increase the accessibility of HR services, eliminate multiple locations of duplicative data, and provide information that managers can use to aid in daily business decisions. The HRIS will be the primary commonwealth HR system and will provide agencies with a centralized area for time and attendance, payroll and personnel management and benefits administration.

This HRIS project is not limited to the Personnel Cabinet. Project activities have begun with the remaining eight cabinets and other agencies. Cross agency teams have been created to ensure successful HRIS implementation. Each cabinet has been fully incorporated into the HRIS project and teams consist of subject matter experts in all areas of HR administration.

The Personnel Cabinet is honored to have the opportunity to fulfill one of Governor Fletcher’s initiatives to streamline state government operations by providing more efficient and effective business processes and helping move the commonwealth into the forefront of technology.

In the upcoming weeks, the Personnel Cabinet will announce the address of the Web site that is currently under construction, which will provide periodic updates of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact HRIS Communications at 564-4690 x 4017.





ADOPTION BENEFIT PROGRAM

By: Lorie Ferguson
Department of Juvenile Justice

I first became interested in adoption during the 1990s when I was working for the Department of Community Based Services. After researching all of the available options, my husband and I decided international adoption was the right choice for us. In August of 2000 we received the greatest blessing of our lives, an eight month old little girl from The People's Republic of China. We named her Zoe. We finalized her adoption here in Kentucky in 2001.

Around the same time, I saw an article about an Adoption Benefit Program for state employees that reimburses adoptive parents for a portion of the costs incurred in their adoptions. I contacted the Personnel Cabinet and was referred to Mrs. Darlene Stewart. Darlene was more than happy to help. The application was simple and easy. The whole process was completed in a couple of weeks.

In November 2002, we received the second greatest blessing of our lives, a 21 month old little boy from Cambodia, who we named Zeke. After finalizing his adoption, I contacted the Personnel Cabinet and had the pleasure of working with Darlene Stewart again. Not only did she remember me from Zoe's adoption, she was thrilled to hear the news of our new addition. The application again was simple, easy and completed very quickly.

The Adoption Benefit Program is available for all state employees in the Executive Branch. It includes international adoptions, Health and Family Services (S.N.A.P.) adoptions

I feel very fortunate to have been able to take advantage of this program and I encourage all employees who have finalized adoptions to inquire about eligibility.

For more information call the Personnel Cabinet Division of Employee Benefits (502) 564-3433 or 1-866-725-5463.

From SECRETARY, Page 1

was developed around 1960. The support for this system is diminishing – five of the seven current programmers for it are expected to retire within the next five years.

Employee information is currently stored in more than 11 separate databases. This means that developing a manual report can take a programmer between three and four days to pull elements for the report from these systems.

The current system also requires a tremendous amount of paper processes as well as the redundant input of personal data for employees by different branches.

The current system also offers little or no employee self-service.

Within the next 18 to 36 months, this will change, thanks to funding for the new HRIS system. Our staff is currently working with other cabinets and state agencies to determine exactly what we want in a new system – a system that will help provide for a more effective and efficient state government.

The new system will be Web-based and integrated, where one system stores all employee information. The new system will also include a user-friendly graphical user interface, and it must be workflow driven in order to eliminate manual transactions.

For example, with the new system, an employee will be able to move from the application phase all the way to the payroll system and other benefits systems with no manual paper process required. This will result in faster response to customer needs.

With a new system, information can be shared seamlessly between cabinets and agencies. Current and potential employees will have access to application information 24/7. In addition, a number of self-service options will be available, allowing employees to enroll in health insurance or other benefits online in the future.

The self-service options this system will provide will simply make the release of information much quicker, reliable and accurate. Our goal in the Personnel Cabinet is to serve as a model in the Commonwealth of Kentucky for the effective and efficient short and long term use of human capital.

With the new HRIS system, we will be able to do just that, and at the same time, meet Governor Fletcher's goal of providing an efficient and effective state government for every citizen of the commonwealth.

EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE

Department of Employee Insurance

As you may have heard, the Public Employee Health Insurance will be going self-insured beginning January 1, 2006. We are very excited about expanding this opportunity statewide.

Many of you may not be aware that both regions one and two have already been self-insured since January 1, 2005, as a pilot project. What does self-insurance mean? Simply put, this means that instead of the commonwealth paying the health insurance carriers to assume the risk of our claims, the commonwealth will be assuming that risk. To accomplish this, the commonwealth will pay an administrative fee to a third party administrator (TPA) to process our health insurance claims. The commonwealth will establish the rates using the administrative fee, claims cost and trends. This should help control the amount of the increases in our health care costs. Self-insurance should be seamless to our employees. The only change you might see is that you may have a new provider network that is associated with the TPA. We are currently in the process of selecting the new third party administrator and as soon as one is named, we will publish this on our Personnel Cabinet Web site.

Many of you have voiced concern over the commonwealth going to self-insurance. We have reviewed other states' self-insurance programs and conducted significant analytical studies which should ensure the success of this program. As we already mentioned, two regions of the Public Employee Health Insurance Program have now been self-insured for seven months. This pilot has been very successful with the transition being virtually seamless to the participants. The participants in the pilot have access to doctors, hospitals, and pharmacies; they pay the same co-payments and co-insurance; and they have the same benefits as the participants in the other six regions of the commonwealth.

There has also been concern that we have participants in our group that are not actually employees of the commonwealth.

See INSURANCE, Page 11

KENTUCKY ROAD TRIPS

KINGDOM COME STATE PARK



(Photo submitted by Commerce Creative Services)

FRANKFORT, Ky. – Rick Fuller, park manager at Kingdom Come State Park, recalls his first up-close encounter with a black bear.

“I was hiking on one of the trails when I came upon a bear. I stood there and it kept walking toward me,” Fuller said. “So I yelled and clapped my hands. It looked straight at me and the one thought I had was, ‘That was stupid, now it knows where I am.’ Why didn’t I just go ahead and run?”

“I kept clapping and, finally, it gave me a look as if to say, ‘Well, are you going to do something?’ then with a look of pure disgust, it walked away.”

Fuller’s experience is unusual. Most visitors to Kingdom Come don’t get close to black bears. There are perhaps two or three reports per year of visitors coming upon a bear while hiking.

But one thing is clear – black bears are making a big comeback in Kentucky, especially in and around this scenic, heavily forested park that straddles Pine Mountain. Hunted to near extinction a century ago, the big mammals apparently have migrated from Virginia and Tennessee in the past decade and have been sighted in a broad area in the eastern half of Kentucky.

For Kingdom Come and the Tri-Cities area of Cumberland, Benham and Lynch, the repopulation of black bears spells an excellent opportunity to attract tourism.

Already, visitors from around the country are traveling up the mountain to Kingdom Come for the chance to see black bears. During the summer, sightings are a daily occurrence at picnic areas scattered around the park. In fact, a group of about 20 local citizens can be counted on to stake out picnic areas every day, armed with still and video cameras, eager to see the bears amble into view.

A traffic counter documents the increasing visitation at Kingdom Come over the past several years. Each year sees the average monthly vehicle count climb by anywhere from 10 to 25 percent, Fuller said. In the height of the summer season, some 6,000 vehicles are recorded at the park each month.

What attracts the bears to the park? In a word, food. The bears and the park are in a constant tug-of-war involving trash cans.

“If you were to describe bears in human terms, you would call them ‘opportunistic’ and ‘lazy,’” Fuller said. “We’ve watched a bear pull a garbage can down, and lay right down in the middle of the garbage, raking it into his mouth.”

Why a bear is such a big eater is hibernation. When a bear comes out of hiber-

See KINGDOM, Page 6



2005 Education at Work Scholarships winners with Governor Fletcher, center, Dept. for Workforce Investment Commissioner Laura E. Owens, left of the Governor, and Education Cabinet Secretary Virginia G. Fox, right of the Governor.
(Photo submitted by Education Cabinet)

THIRTY-FOUR KENTUCKIANS WIN EDUCATION AT WORK SCHOLARSHIPS

Kentucky Education Cabinet Secretary Virginia G. Fox presented the cabinet's Education at Work scholarship to 34 Kentuckians July 21 in the Capitol Rotunda in Frankfort. The cabinet gave the \$500 scholarships to students who are pursuing postsecondary education in Kentucky.

Secretary Fox said, "It's an honor to recognize the 2005 Education at Work Scholarship winners today. The scholarship winners come from a cross section of Kentucky and represent the hope and spirit of Kentucky. As I read their winning 'Unbridled Spirit' essays, I felt their pride in our state and the hope that they have as they pursue their educational goals and career dreams. I'm encouraged by their sense of purpose and how they want to give back to their communities as they grow and accomplish their varied higher education aspirations."

About 200 Kentuckians applied for the seventh annual scholarship competition. Including this year, the cabinet has awarded 180 scholarships totaling \$90,000 for postsecondary education. The scholarship began under the former Cabinet for Workforce Development and has grown from 20 scholarships in 1999 to this year's 34 scholarships.

Secretary Fox said she was impressed with the level of commitment the winners have shown toward achieving their goals.

"It's exciting to see the dedication and determination that our scholarship winners have about pursuing their education and careers and for our cabinet to participate in their success. Our scholarship winners are at different places in their lives and careers. Some are just starting their postsecondary education while others are close to getting their diplomas, but they all realize that education is important and learning is a life-long pursuit," Secretary Fox said.

Kentuckians qualified for the scholarship by using one of the services of the Education Cabinet's Department for Workforce Investment or Kentucky Adult Education in the Council on Postsecondary Education, such as vocational rehabilitation, adult learning centers, GED preparation, secondary Kentucky Tech school, unemployment insurance, job placement, dislocated worker or Workforce Investment Act assistance. Scholarship applicants were required to write an essay on Kentucky's new 'Unbridled Spirit' brand and how it relates to their educational and career goals. The \$500 scholarships may be used for tuition, books and lab and technology fees.

"Some of our scholarship winners have returned to the classroom after years of being out of school while others are going straight from high school to postsecondary school. Many of these students are overcoming great obstacles to accomplish their goals and this is our way of recognizing their efforts," said Department for Workforce Investment Commissioner Laura E. Owens.

"I also applaud our Department for Workforce Investment employees and service providers who have helped these students and many other Kentuckians succeed in school and the workplace. Many of the scholarship applicants wrote in their

See EDUCATION, Page 10

From KINGDOM, Page 4

nation in the spring, it might weigh 150 pounds. Nine months later, having fattened up to sustain itself through the upcoming months of inactivity, it might have doubled its weight, Fuller noted.

A local organization called the Black Bear Task Force is committed to attracting tourism dollars from visitors who want to see the bears. The task force has hired an architect to develop plans for a bear habitat at Kingdom Come. The enclosed area, which will be designed to blend into the environment, will ensure that the opportunity to see several bears at the park won't be left to chance. The habitat will ensure a safe environment for bear watching. The habitat will also include an interpretive center.

Parks Commissioner George Ward said he is pleased to work with local officials to develop the tourism potential of black bear sightings at Kingdom Come.

"We're eager to do everything we can to take advantage of this opportunity," Ward said. "We understand that tourism is an important component to revitalizing the local economy."

He noted that the department also continues to move toward acquiring several local tourism resources that would be added to Kingdom Come State Park, namely the Portal 31 exhibition coal mine, the nearby coal-mining museum, and the Benham Schoolhouse Inn.

"These are exciting times for this area," Ward said. "I've been in close contact with local leaders and have visited the Tri-Cities area numerous times over the past year. It is clear that there is a momentum building for tourism growth, and we intend to play a critical role in the process."

Among short-term improvements being considered for Kingdom Come is the purchase of bear-proof garbage cans – basically a can with a screw-on top. At \$700 each, the standard metal can is pricey. Park staff members are experimenting with a \$75 plastic receptacle that has a flap where trash can be thrown in, but also has a screw-on top that would foil a bear's attempt at getting inside.

A long-term improvement being evaluated by state transportation officials is rerouting the access road to the park.

Bear-watching season at Kingdom Come is starting to pick up, with several sightings being reported lately, Fuller said.

There has never been an injury to a park visitor from a bear, and both Fuller and the park's rangers plan to keep it that way. A few commonsense precautions will ensure a visitor's safety.

First, view the bears from the safety of your car or at least stay near your car, Fuller said. Second, don't get close to them. While they aren't aggressive creatures, they are wild animals. Third, don't feed the bears. It is both illegal and unwise, because a bear that expects feeding becomes much bolder and less shy around humans.

Fuller said his advice in the unlikely event that a park guest comes close to a bear is to stand your ground and make as much noise as possible to scare him away.

GOVERNOR FLETCHER PROMOTES SAFETY WITH EXECUTIVE ORDER

Several weeks ago Governor Fletcher signed an executive order to promote safety for all state employees. Over the past five years there has been an increase in workers' compensation costs. There is a need for increased awareness and cooperation with respect to understanding the importance of this issue.

A comprehensive safety program and a well-defined return-to-work program are an integral part of controlling costs associated with occupational injuries and illnesses. Many of these accidents and resulting injuries can be prevented with a comprehensive safety program.

Governor Fletcher's executive order establishes an Executive Safety Advisory Committee with one or more representatives from each major cabinet or major agency of state government. The purpose of the committee is to engage in statewide governmental services strategic planning to develop and promote a workplace safety program for state employees designed to reduce the number of work-related accidents and illnesses.

This committee shall report annually to the Governor the progress made in improving workplace health and safety, agencies reduction in the number of work-related injuries and illnesses and the decrease in workers' compensation costs.

The Office for Employee Relations in the Personnel Cabinet will have the responsibility for implementing strategies in safety program development, a return-to-work program and management of the workers' compensation program. The goal is to reduce work-related illnesses and injuries and decrease workers' compensation costs.

**Kentucky Employee
Suggestion System****EARN UP TO
\$2,500****FOR YOUR IDEAS
Check Out the New****Employee Suggestion System
Electronically Submit Your
Suggestions****Personnel Cabinet's Home Page
<http://personnel.ky.gov>**



(Photo submitted by Commerce Creative Services)

CARTER CAVES STATE RESORT PARK
344 CAVELAND DRIVE, OLIVE HILL, KY 41164
(606) 286-4411
www.parks.ky.gov

Beneath the forested hills of this resort, nature has hidden more than 20 twisting caverns. Visit Cascade Cave, where you'll discover a 30-foot underground waterfall. A must-see while you're at Carter Caves is X Cave, where, for millions of years, nature has formed luminous stone fans, pipes and spirals.

Tours are conducted daily throughout the year. Of the twenty caves found in the park, three caves have been prepared for tours. Free permits plus tour schedules, fees, and other details are available at the Welcome Center. Tours are arranged for school groups. Bat Cave and Saltpetre Cave tours are seasonal and only open from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend.

✓ **Cascade Cave** is the largest of over 200 caves in Carter County and is noted for its larger chambers and numerous cave formations. A highlight of the tour is an underground waterfall over 30 feet high. Although a short drive is necessary to reach Cascade from the main park, the inconvenience is most rewarding.

✓ **Saltpetre Cave** is a fascinating segment of Kentucky history underground. The Saltpetre Cave was used during the War of 1812 as a source of the major ingredient in gunpowder.

✓ **X Cave** is the perfect example of two vertical passages that were carved out by groundwater in a large layer of limestone bedding. On this tour you can view many beautiful cave formations including the largest formation in the park, which stands over 30 feet tall. The cave gets its name from the configuration of its passages, which seem to cross in the middle to form the letter "X".

✓ **Bat Cave** is a *WILD* cave tour. Each person must have close-toed shoes and a dependable source of light. Some stooping and bending is required and be prepared to get your feet wet and dirty upon returning. This trip is not recommended for children under 6 years of age. The tour may be canceled due to high water. Advance sign up is at the Welcome Center.

✓ **Bat Cave & Saltpetre Cave Spelunking Tours** are where you get to see the wild dark passages of these caves. These tours require hands and knee crawls through some of the dark and dirty passages winding through the caves. Saltpetre Cave tends to be dry and dusty, while Bat Cave tends to be wet and muddy. These tours are somewhat strenuous and not recommended if you are claustrophobic, have back problems, knee problems, or in poor health.

The tours are 2½ hours in length and require you to wear long pants and a long sleeve shirt, close-toed shoes and everyone must have a dependable flashlight with new batteries. Kneepads and flashlights can be purchased at the Welcome Center.

From GOVERNOR, Page 1

and Senate, Democrats, Republicans, Independents, merit employees, veterans and minorities.

You are all aware of recent events surrounding the merit system and know the complexity of the issue I am asking you to tackle.

Before I charge you with the goals of this Blue Ribbon Commission, let me assure you that as I stated and shared with state employees during my campaign: I support the protection of merit employees.

I believed then and still believe that the overwhelming majority of state workers, merit and non-merit, are hard working, well intended and want to do a good job.

Needless to say, I've learned a lot in the last 19 months.

Administrations come and go by the will of the people, who elect new leaders, and by the wisdom of limiting terms of governors.

We must remember the era of abuses when state employees were fired and hired at the will of each new administration.

Because of abuses, 45 years ago the current merit system was conceived and established in statute. Some changes have been made over the ensuing years. But the merit system as originally drafted remained largely intact.

Much has transpired since that time. The needs of state government and the people it serves have changed. The available workforce has changed. The merit law has not kept up.

For example, the 1964 civil rights act was passed after our current merit system was established.

Additionally, the recent problems were, to some extent, predicted by a study done by a previous administration.

In 1993, Governor Brereton Jones established a task force to study the current merit system.

The findings were striking. They determined that:

- Programs were not reflective of modern practices;
- There existed confusion; compensation inequities in multiple systems;
- Statutes and regulations were confusing and rigid;
- The law was obsolete and ineffective with inconsistent interpretation and enforcement;
- Rules and regulations were elaborate, confusing, outdated, and inappropriate, impeding the ability of government to recruit, develop, engage and retain a competent and motivated work force; and
- Agency specific personnel systems have resulted in a fragmented state personnel system that is cumbersome, inefficient and inequitable.

Twelve years passed, and nothing of substance was done with those poignant recommendations.

Now, let me give a very brief synopsis of my experience since taking this office regarding personnel.

Our first duty, and a quite challenging one, was to estab-

lish a management team that shared my vision: a vision that the voters of Kentucky hardily endorsed.

Those management positions were the non-merit positions or political appointees.

The Republican Party had not been at the reigns of state government for decades and needed the expertise of those who had extensive executive branch experience. Thus, many of the previous appointees were left in their positions to facilitate continuity.

For example, the director of personnel in the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet was left in place initially to oversee that challenging task.

We also chose a veteran state employee of outstanding reputation to head my personnel office in the governor's office, Tommy Greenwell, a former director of personnel.

That was by design to give us the experience we needed and lacked.

I also chose to avoid merit employee firing as a means of meeting a very challenging budget deficit because of my concern and respect for those families who had provided service to our state.

I additionally elected not to place a patronage boss in each county, which was the standard practice of previous administrations.

Instead, I established, as promised, a network of constituent service individuals to take Frankfort to the people: to work with local and state elected officials and to help those who needed state assistance in any way.

They have done a remarkable job.

After a few months, it became clear that there was still a patronage system largely intact. My folks in the field received complaints that only those who had Democratic ties to those in the merit system had the opportunity to gain employment or get promoted.

I estimate that more than 90 percent of merit employees are Democrat in registration.

Why? Because people hire people they know and trust. Members of one party have run the state for decades, and they hired those they knew and trusted.

In fact, in 1974 when I applied for a job in Transportation, I was told that I needed to change my registration. I had forgotten that until my mother recently reminded me.

It was common knowledge and accepted.

It also appears that there was a patronage system run out of the previous governor's office influencing who was and was not hired.

Not long into my administration, it became clear that even within the merit system there were hiring practices that did not reflect hiring based upon merit.

Republicans had little, if any, opportunity to gain employment within state government. They didn't know anyone in

See GOVERNOR, Page 9

From GOVERNOR, Page 8

state government. They didn't know the system or even how to apply and qualify.

In response to that, we — through our LINK organization — helped all those who sought employment to better understand the system.

We also provided instruction on the merit system and how it worked.

From there, an ad hoc referral system apparently developed to address the pent-up demand of people who had been shut out for decades. In retrospect, the old patronage system being dismantled produced a vacuum that something had to fill.

If I had that to do over, I would have established what I've done now: Establish a centralized referral center within the Personnel Cabinet to ensure that the plethora of recommendations could be vetted and directed appropriately. That was a management mistake on my part.

But, in the absence of no centralized process, recommendations were made to the cabinet level and were to be handled in accordance with the merit law. Much of the advice to ensure compliance came from career employees who had worked with previous administrations. That experience gave my management an assurance that they were being compliant.

As I have acknowledged, mistakes were made. I do not believe that they were intentional illegal actions.

A level playing field was my desire and directive, something that Republicans had clearly not had in the past.

You know the rest of the story. It is a sad story because many good people are being hurt by enforcing — in an unprecedented and vicious fashion — a system that has been described as rigid, confusing, obsolete and ineffective.

In Monroe County, a largely Republican county, it was rare for a Republican to be hired in the highway garage. In fact, the first two people hired even under my administration were Democrats, according to local officials.

In Bath County, I'm told that, to this date, a Republican hasn't been hired and has never been hired in their memory. That may be an exaggeration, but it was told to me by the local officials there during a recent visit.

Additionally, we have a merit system where, clearly, hiring in the past was based on political affiliation — unless of course you believe that Republicans are just not inherently qualified for state jobs.

Given this background, let me give you my charge for the work I would like this task force to do:

1. I want you to review the merit law, as it stands, to understand its complexity and breadth.
2. I want you to examine how it has been implemented in the past and the present.
3. I want you to review and address the 1993 Task Force report findings and recommendations.

4. I want you to make recommendations to me regarding any changes that are needed in the merit system law and implementation.

Some principles that I want you to consider as you do your work include developing a law and process that:

1. Gives the appropriate protection to our state workers from capricious and arbitrary hiring practices.
2. Will ensure that a democratically elected governor can advance his or her vision that the people of Kentucky endorsed through the election process.
3. Provides clear safe harbors and clearly defined procedures that ensure compliance meets the goals of protecting employees and protects those implementing the system from arbitrary civil and criminal actions.
4. Is efficient, practical and reflective of modern practices to ensure that state government can be run efficiently and effectively.
5. Fosters the recruitment, retention and development of a competent and motivated work force.

Let me close by again thanking you for serving on this task force. The work that you do will have a tremendous impact on how state government works in the future and how this state prospers.



Governor Ernie Fletcher

PERSONNEL CABINET EEO CONFERENCE

The Personnel Cabinet is proud to once again host the 19th Annual Governor's EEO Conference. This year's conference will take place October 10-12 at the Holiday Inn Hurstborne in Louisville, Ky. This is the premier training event for EEO Coordinators, Counselors, ADA and Diversity Practitioners, and Personnel Executives and Administrators. Over the course of three days, you will have the opportunity to attend workshops, meet with leading local practitioners in the EEO fields, network and receive tools to develop and enhance skills needed to perform in this role. The conference will feature presentations from the Federal EEOC and the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights. The Personnel Cabinet has also successfully attracted more voices, thus perspectives, from outside our public service community, such as Carol A. Dawson of the nationwide corporation "EEO Guidance." Not your conventional presenter, Carol exemplifies the message

See EEO, Page 12

From EDUCATION, Page 5

essays that the guidance, encouragement and assistance from their Workforce Investment service providers has given them the inspiration and help they need to overcome physical, financial and learning difficulties and earn their degrees,” Commissioner Owens said.

The following list of the scholarship winners includes information about them.

Marilyn Barnett, 48, of Clay City is studying business management at Lexington Community College. Barnett is a customer of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Frank Blevins, 22, of Nicholasville plans to study psychology at Lexington Community College. Blevins is a customer of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Wendy Burden, 35, of Owensboro is majoring in social work at Owensboro Community and Technical College. Burden is a customer of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Jennifer Claywell, 25, of Bardstown is studying radiography at Elizabethtown Community and Technical College. Claywell is a customer of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Vella Conner, 31, of Allen is studying business administration at Big Sandy Community and Technical College. Conner is a customer of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Samuel Cook Jr., 48, of Louisville is majoring in social work at Spalding University. Cook is a customer of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

James Dennis Jr., 19, of Caneyville is studying business management at Brescia University. Dennis is a customer of the Office for the Blind.

Leaetta Eaton, 54, of Corbin is studying early childhood education at Somerset Community College. Eaton is a customer of Kentucky Adult Education.

Byron Eldridge, 18, of Whitesburg is studying auto body repair at Hazard Community and Technical College. Eldridge is a customer of the Office of Career and Technical Education.

Jerry Evans, 18, of Paintsville is studying carpentry at Big Sandy Community and Technical College’s Mayo Campus in Paintsville. Evans is a customer of the Office of Career and Technical Education.

Michelle Good, 38, of Oneida is majoring in elementary education at Eastern Kentucky University. Good is a customer of the Office of Employment and Training.

Sandra Hammer, 42, of Glasgow is studying sociology at Western Kentucky University. Hammer is a customer of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Mona Jacobs, 45, of Pippa Passes is studying nursing at Hazard Community and Technical College. Jacobs is a customer of the Office of Employment and Training.

Michelle Johnson, 30, of Manchester is majoring in elementary education at Eastern Kentucky University. Johnson is a customer of the Office of Employment and Training.

B. L. Kirk III, 54, of Lexington is majoring in social work at the University of Kentucky. Kirk is a customer of the Office for the Blind.

Carrie Klaber, 24, of Frankfort is studying law at Salmon P. Chase College of Law. Klaber is a customer of the Office for the Blind. This is the second year that she has won the scholarship.

Katrina Kleiber, 18, of Bardstown plans to study journalism and attend St. Catharine College. She is a customer of Kentucky Adult Education.

Melissa Lee, 27, of Woodbine is studying nursing at Eastern Kentucky University. Lee is a customer of the Office of Employment and Training.

Belinda Nicole Mann, 19, of Inez is studying business administration and accounting at Big Sandy Community and Technical College. Mann is a customer of the Office of Employment and Training.

James Meyer, 20, of Louisville is attending Jefferson Community and Technical College. Meyer is a customer of Kentucky Adult Education.

Kory Miller, 19, of Boston plans to study engineering at Morehead State University. Miller is a customer of the Office of Career and Technical Education.

Latonia Morrison, 29, of Inez is studying nursing at Big Sandy Community and Technical College. Morrison is a customer of the Office of Employment and Training.

Sara Mudd, 23, of Louisville is majoring in history at the University of Louisville. Mudd is a customer of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. This is the fourth year that she has won the scholarship.

Barbara Mullikin, 37, of Berea is studying nursing at Eastern Kentucky University. Mullikin is a customer of Kentucky Adult Education.

KENTUCKY EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

KEAP INFORMED: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

By Mary Jane Cowherd, KEAP

Sticks and Stones May Break My Bones.....

We all know the end of that childhood rhyme. But the idea that words will never hurt is just wrong. Words can hurt very badly. Sometimes words can be considered abusive. In a relationship that should be loving and supportive a verbal abuser will use words to question their partner's judgment, insult or humiliate them. A verbal abuser will twist words around and change the meaning. There are many other manipulations that verbal or emotional abusers use on their partner. The result is that the partner loses self-confidence and lives life walking on eggshells trying to avoid behavior that will upset the abuser. Unfortunately that is an exercise in futility. The partner will never be able to "get it right" because the rules are constantly shifting. The abuser can't take responsibility for things, and always blames others. Frequently they are extremely possessive of their partners and can be jealous for no reason. The abuser usually is unable to perceive that their behavior is problematic because they lack the ability to have insight. Without insight into a problem there will be no change in their behavior.

Verbal or emotional abuse is one type of domestic violence. It is just as prevalent but less visible than physical abuse. This is an unpleasant topic for everyone, but information is power. So, here are some facts and figures about domestic violence.

- Approximately one third of emergency room visits by women seeking treatment for injuries are a result of domestic violence.
- Over 5,400 women and children seek shelter from domestic violence each year in one of Kentucky's 14 state funded shelters.
- Between 1976 and 1996 there were 31,260 women murdered by their intimate partners.

- 95% of all victims of domestic violence are female. Yet according to the Department of Corrections the average prison sentence for a woman that murders her intimate partner is 15 years, while a man that murders his intimate partner receives a sentence of 2 to 6 years.

Battering is a systematic pattern of violent, coercive and intimidating behaviors toward a current or past intimate partner. The intent is frequently (but not exclusively) to punish, abuse and ultimately control the thoughts, beliefs and actions of the victim. Control is the prize for an abuser.

Is there a victim of domestic violence in your life? If so what can you do to help? First of all do NOT blame or judge the victim. A victim of domestic violence does NOT "ask for it". There are complex issues involved that may seem simple to those outside the situation. You can provide information about potential helping resources. The Kentucky Domestic Violence Hotline number is 1-800-752-6200. This number can provide information about resources in all Kentucky counties. A little known law on the Kentucky books (KRS 209.030) says that if anyone knows of or suspects abuse, which includes domestic violence, they must report it to their local office of Protection and Permanency. As an employer, creating an environment that is supportive of victims is important. If an employee takes out an Emergency Protective Order (which may become a Domestic Violence Order within two weeks) it is a good idea to give a copy of it, along with a photo of the perpetrator, to your building security officer. An employer can temporarily relocate a victim to another worksite for their protection. Consider asking security to escort the employee to and from their car. Phone calls can be screened or the work phone number can be changed. Co-workers can encourage victims to contact the Kentucky Employee Assistance Program at 1-800-445-5327.

From INSURANCE, Page 4

Please be assured that the law has been changed so that the groups/employees must be contributing to one of the state-sponsored retirement systems in order to qualify to participate in the Public Employee Health Insurance Program. We are also looking at the experience of previous programs to ensure that we incorporate the strengths, while avoiding any pitfalls.

We are hopeful about the potential to control the amount of increases in costs that becoming self-insured will provide. We look forward to a seamless transition when we expand the program statewide on January 1, 2006.

We would like to thank everyone for their participation in the online survey conducted in July. We are in the process of compiling and analyzing the results of the 6,800 responses to the survey. As soon as the results are analyzed, more information will be forthcoming to address the concerns identified in the survey. Please visit the Personnel Cabinet Web site frequently for future updates. You may visit the web site at <http://personnel.ky.gov/>.

From EDUCATION, Page 10

William Campbell Nance, 24, of Lexington is studying civil engineering technology at Lexington Community College. Nance is a customer of the Office of Employment and Training.

Vickie Pace, 48, of Corbin is majoring in nursing at Somerset Community College. Pace is a customer of the Office of Employment and Training.

Joel Rivera, 20, of Princeton is majoring in computer science at the University of Kentucky. Rivera is a customer of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Sarah Sherk, 25, of Brownsville is studying counseling and human development at Lindsey Wilson College. Sherk is a customer of the Office for the Blind.

Angie Stith, 35, of Florence is a business major at Thomas More College. Stith is a customer of the Office of Employment and Training. This is the second year that she has won the scholarship.

Tammy Tutt, 35, of Bowling Green is majoring in social work at Western Kentucky University. Tutt is a customer of the Office for the Blind.

Matthew Wampler, 22, of Pikeville is studying art at Big Sandy Community and Technical College. Wampler is a customer of the Office for the Blind.

Karisa Ward, 30, of Cave City is majoring in nursing at Western Kentucky University. Ward is a customer of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Maranda Watson, 28, of Stanton is studying nursing at Eastern Kentucky University. Watson is a customer of Kentucky Adult Education.

Trent Willoughby, 19, of Dixon is studying industrial safety at Madisonville Community College. Willoughby is a customer of the Office of Career and Technical Education.

The Education Cabinet coordinates learning programs from K-16, and manages and supports training and employment functions in the Department of Workforce Investment. For more information about our programs, visit www.educationcabinet.ky.gov or call (502) 564-6606, or visit Kentucky Adult Education at www.kyae.ky.gov or call (502) 573-5114.

From EEO, Page 9

she preaches. She is the lone Kentuckian finalist in the national Women Helping Women and Best New Business of the Year categories of the prestigious 2004 Stevie Awards for Women Entrepreneurs. A leading example of the strides women are making in public agencies and private industries alike, Dawson has taken her “never-boring” training sessions to EEO Compliance Officers and state agencies across the country. We are fortunate to have her here in the commonwealth.

Other workshops include, the “Business Case for Diversity” and a video presentation of an “Unlikely Friendship.” This year’s conference is a training opportunity that you and/or your employees will not want to miss.

In addition to work related opportunities, the Personnel Cabinet will be honoring those who have made a commitment in championing diversity through these efforts. Nominations are being sought for the prestigious Anderson Laureate Medal for 2005. Candidates must have achievements that benefit individuals in at least one of the seven EEO protected classes of race, color, age, national origin, gender, religion and disability.

The medal is given each year to a Kentuckian who has enhanced opportunity and equality in some aspect of Kentucky life. The medal is named for the late State Representative Charles W. Anderson, Jr., who was elected to his first term in 1936. Representative Anderson was the first black legislator to serve in the Kentucky General Assembly, as well as in the South, since the era of Reconstruction. He died in an automobile accident in 1960. In calling for nominations, the Anderson Laureate Selection Committee noted that any person may nominate an individual for the Anderson Laureate Medal. Nominations have been extended until September 1, 2005. For more information or to download a nomination form, please visit <http://personnel.ky.gov/stemp/laureate.htm> or call (502) 564-4460.

As the commonwealth continues to move forward in achieving its goals in female and minority hiring, this year’s EEO Conference is just one step towards that direction.

“This year we wanted to change the format to include more topics related solely to the issues of equal employment and opportunity. We wanted our state employees to have access to additional resources and to begin thinking about diversity and what it means to the commonwealth,” said Stephanie Surratt, Special Assistant to the Personnel Cabinet. Developing diversity in the workplace and meeting agency employment goals are the essential pieces of an even greater universal objective to support Governor Fletcher’s commitment to creating opportunities for all Kentuckians. The goal of the 19th Annual EEO Conference is to supply participants with the resources and information that make the larger goal feasible, efficient, and successful for the Commonwealth of Kentucky. For more information or to download a nomination form, please visit <http://personnel.ky.gov> or call (502) 564-4460.

FREE TIME COMMUNIQUÉ WORD SEARCH

SUMMER TIME IN KENTUCKY

```

X L L A V I T S E F N A I C I S U M R E T S A M M B N X
L K X N R P S P L R K X K O L Q S C P W Z W L X O T Z Q
L W S O E K N T L B J T Q C N P T G A K N F G A H M H J
V D E I L L D D A R Z B S H O J H T O W Q R T N Z X F R
W B K T T K N N K T P Z Q Y D L E Y L D D I W L J Y Y C
R B A A U I A N B Z E T K M A R C K Q N N N R G G A K K
K A C C B C L W T I L F V M S D G L E G W R B R W L C L
D R L A L E R Q M R K H A P Z V T K A Q M S O D G N Z R
Y B E V A C E K Q R J E O I S L E R B R Y F E C G L H Y
R E N R R R B T N K R R R I R E H Q U A O E J M C Q Q T
C C N L E E M R H K T L X I W H H P D O P L J J M R P T
V U U R N A U Y X S J F D H D L R Y I S C K F N M K N K
G E F W E M C B N R L L S R F E L X Y R X G N I P M A C
V L P N G Y E V M A H I E H M L S K Z Q T Z H B F R H G
W K D D L K K M G F T V J Z I P C Z F T C D M L N Z K N
M J L C G W A S L T I N P B M U V N L S L X A T R E L W
N T P Y T G L T O R H R L Y T W K N F W L E W O E J B R
M P I X B V Y C N B D L E N Z J N X T I N R M N R F G R
D W C Z L V S E T B I G E W N J E X D M T R E O M V N L
N K N M N G E N M H Q K G R O L D W L M C L H V N G X V
A B I D C R R K N L R F M K O R D R K I A X X R L A K L
B M C X G Z V Q N K G O F R P N K X R N K M D P Y D D K
S R I A F S T R A D N A L D O O W S D G X C W T V R K E
S K H O R S E P A R K M K T M T L X H W K P C L C L H Q
A N J F G N Y L Z F M V R K L X S E H C A E B H Z J B B
R R M K G B L U E S B R E W B B Q S E L P P A Y D N A C
B V K J P A R A D E Q L O U I S V I L L E Z O O M G N Y
B G V J M O U N T A I N L A U R E L F E S T I V A L L H

```

Barbecue
 Beaches
 Bike Rides
 Blues Brew BBQ
 Boating
 Brass Band
 Camping
 Candy Apples
 Corn Dogs
 Court Days

Floral Clock
 Funnel Cakes
 General Butler
 Green River
 Hillbilly Days
 Horse Park
 Ice Cream
 Keeneland
 Kentucky Speedway
 Lake Cumberland
 Lemonade

Louisville Zoo
 Master Musician Festival
 Mountain Laurel Festival
 Parade
 Picnic
 Road Trip
 Rolex
 Scottish Weekend
 Six Flags
 State Fair
 Swimming

Vacation
 Water Sports
 Woodland Arts Fair



CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

September 5: Labor Day

September 10-11, 17-18: Beginner Backpacking Trips at Natural Bridge State Resort Park. Preregistration is required by contacting Noelle Theres at noelle.theres@ky.gov.

September 13-15: 8th Annual Audubon VSA Arts and Music Festival at John James Audubon State Park

September 17: Night Owl Golf Scramble at General Butler State Resort Park. Deadline for registration Wednesday September 14th.

September 24: National Public Lands Day at Big Bone Lick State Park. Choose from a variety of different areas and different tasks to help keep our public lands pristine.

OCTOBER

October 1: Craft Show at Greenbo Lake State Resort Park. Registration deadline for vendors is September 30th.

October 8, 15, 22: Elk Viewing Tours at Jenny Wiley State Resort Park. Tour price is \$12 per person.

October 11-23: Halloween Fest XI at Fort Boonesboro State Park


October 22: Halloween Harvest of Horrors at E. P "Tom" Sawyer State Park. The fun starts at 5:00 p.m. and lasts until 8:00p.m.

October 29: Greenbo 5K Challenge at Greenbo Lake State Resort Park.

October 31: Halloween



COMMONWEALTH COMMUNIQUÉ



The *Commonwealth Communique* is published by the Kentucky Personnel Cabinet and is printed with state funds.

If you are unable to access *Communique* online, please let us know, and we will make a printed copy available to you.

The Commonwealth of Kentucky does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, ancestry or veteran status. Reasonable accommodations are provided upon request.

<http://personnel.ky.gov>

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

Below is the solution to the *Kentucky Derby Winners* crossword puzzle in the April issue. This issue's puzzle, *Summer Time in Kentucky*, is on page 13, look for the solution in the next issue.

A	R	I	S	T	I	D	E	S		J	O	N	E	S
L	I	K	E	N		O		M	A	U	D		D	E
I	D	E	A		F	W		A	B	L	E		D	C
	E		S		O	N		R		E		A	I	R
C		R	O	S	E	S		T	I	P		T	E	E
A	L	I	N	E				A	Y	E		A	T	
L	U	G		A	F	A	R				F	L	O	R
U	K		C	H	U	R	C	H	I	L	L		O	R
M	A		H	E	M		A		N	E		T	A	I
E	S	P		R	E	A	R		F	E	M	O	R	A
T		A	D	O		H	O		I	T	E	M		T
F		L			P	A		B	E		S	E	M	
A		S	O	H	O		S	I	L	K	S		I	M
R				A		P	A	T	D	A	Y		N	A
M	O	U	N	T		A	T	E		T		S	T	Y